

2022 MASTER PLAN
TOWNSHIP OF FLORENCE
BURLINGTON COUNTY, NEW JERSEY




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TOWNSHIP OF FLORENCE 2022 MASTER PLAN

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Appendix A
Vision For Florence Township, Burlington County, NJ

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the Master Plan

This 2022 Master Plan is intended to provide a set of policies for the Township of Florence that will guide municipal officials, the planning and zoning boards, and citizens on decisions and regulations within the Township. The Master Plan is a broad policy document that guides the use of lands and the future physical, economic, and social development of the Township. The Master Plan contains an inventory of the municipality's existing conditions, articulates the community's vision and goals, identifies its needs, and provides long-range policy recommendations for achieving the community's vision and goals for the future. It is the principle document used to formulate the contents of a community's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations. The Master Plan serves as a reference guide so that future land use decisions are made in a consistent and reasoned manner.

B. Scope of a Master Plan

The *Municipal Land Use Law, (MLUL) N.J.S.A. 40:55 D-28*, states that the planning board may prepare and, after public hearing, adopt or amend a master plan or component parts thereof, to guide the use of lands within the municipality in a manner which protects the public health and safety and promotes the general welfare. The master plan shall generally comprise a report or statement and land use and development proposals, with maps, diagrams and text, presenting, at least the following elements (1) and (2) and, where appropriate, the following elements (3) through (17):

- (1) **A Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards** upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic, and social development of the municipality are based;
- (2) **A Land Use Plan Element**
 - (a) Taking into account and stating its relationship to the statement provided for in (1) hereof, and other master plan elements provided for in paragraphs (3) through (17) and natural conditions, including, but not necessarily limited to, topography, soil conditions, water supply, drainage, flood plain areas, marshes, and woodlands;
 - (b) Showing the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, open space, educational and other public and private purposes or combination of purposes including any provisions for cluster development; and stating the relationship thereof to the existing and any proposed zone plan and zoning ordinance; and
 - (c) Showing the existing and proposed location of any airports and the boundaries of airport safety zones; and

- (5) **A Utility Service Plan Element** analyzing the need for and showing the future general location of water supply and distribution facilities, drainage and flood control facilities, sewerage and waste treatment, solid waste disposal and provision for other related utilities, and including any storm water management plan.
- (6) **A Community Facilities Plan Element** showing the existing and proposed location and type of educational or cultural facilities, historic sites, libraries, hospitals, firehouses, police stations and other related facilities, including their relation to the surrounding areas.
- (7) **A Recreation Plan Element** showing a comprehensive system of areas and public sites for recreation;
- (8) **A Conservation Plan Element** providing for the preservation, conservation, and utilization of natural resources, including, to the extent appropriate, energy, open space, water supply, forests, soil, marshes, wetlands, harbors, rivers and other waters, fisheries, endangered or threatened species wildlife and other resources, and which systemically analyzes the impact of each other component and element of the master plan on the present and future preservation, conservation and utilization of those resources.
- (9) **An Economic Plan Element** considering all aspects of economic development and sustained economic vitality, including a comparison of the types of employment expected to be provided by the economic development to be promoted with the characteristics of the labor pool resident in the municipality and nearby areas and an analysis of the stability and diversity of the economic development to be promoted.
- (10) **An Historic Preservation Plan Element** indicating the location and significance of historic sites and historic districts, identifying the standards used to assess worthiness for historic site or district identification, and analyzing the impact of each component and element of the master plan on the preservation of historic sites and districts.
- (11) **Appendices** or separate reports containing the technical foundation for the master plan and its elements
- (12) **A Recycling Plan Element** which incorporates the state Recycling Plan goals, including provisions for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials designated in the municipal recycling ordinance, and for the collection, disposition and recycling of recyclable materials within any development proposal for the construction of 50 or more units of single-family residential housing or 25 or more units of multi-family residential housing and any commercial or industrial development proposal for the utilization of 1,000 square feet or more of land.
- (13) **A Farmland Preservation Plan Element** which shall include: an inventory of farm properties and a map illustrating significant areas of agricultural

land; a statement showing that municipal ordinances support and promote agriculture as a business; and a plan for preserving as much farmland as possible in the short term by leveraging moneys made available by P.L. 1888, c.152 (C.13:8C-1 et al.) through a variety of mechanisms including, but not limited to, utilizing option agreements, installment purchases, and encouraging donations of permanent development easements

- (14) **A Development Transfer Plan Element** which sets forth the public purposes, the locations of sending and receiving zones and the technical details of a development transfer program based on the provisions of section 5 of P.L. 2004, c.2 (C.40:55D-141);
- (15) **An Educational Facilities Plan Element** which incorporates the purposes and goals of the "Long-Range Facilities Plan" required to be submitted to the Commissioner of Education by a school district pursuant to section 4 of P. L. 2000, c.72(C.18A:7G-4).
- (16) **A Green Buildings and Environmental Sustainability Plan Element**, which shall provide for, encourage, and promote the efficient use of natural resources and the installation and usage of renewable energy systems; consider, encourage and promote the development of public electric vehicle charging infrastructure in locations appropriate for their development, including but not limited to, commercial districts, areas proximate to public transportation and transit facilities and transportation corridors, and public rest stops; consider the impact of buildings on the local, regional and global environment; allow ecosystems to function naturally; conserve and reuse water; treat storm water on-site; and optimize climatic conditions through site orientation and design; and
- (17) **A Public Access Plan Element** that provides for, encourages, and promotes permanently protected public access to all tidal waters and adjacent shorelines consistent with the public trust doctrine, and which shall include a map and inventory of public access points, public facilities that support access, parking, boat ramps, and marinas; an assessment of the need for additional public access; a statement of goals and administrative mechanisms to ensure that access will be permanently protected; and a strategy that describes the forms of access to satisfy the need for such access with an implementation schedule and tools for implementation.

The Master Plan shall include a specific policy statement indicating the relationship of the proposed development of the municipality, as developed in the master plan to:

- (1) The master plans of contiguous municipalities,
- (2) The master plan of the county in which the municipality is located,
- (3) The State Development and Redevelopment Plan

- (4) The district solid waste management plan required pursuant to the provisions of the "Solid Waste Management Act" of the county in which the municipality is located.

C. 2021 Master Plan Elements

The Township of Florence has chosen to prepare the following required and optional elements for the 2021 Master Plan:

- *Statement of Objectives, Principles and Assumptions, Policies and Standards*
- *Land Use Plan Element*
- *Utility Service Plan Element*
- *Circulation Plan Element*
- *Recreation Plan Element*
- *Conservation Plan Element*
- *Economic Plan Element*
- *Historic Preservation Plan Element*
- *Recycling Plan Element*
- *Farmland Preservation Plan Element*
- *Educational Facilities Plan Element*
- *Public Access Plan Element*
- *Interrelationship of the Plan to the Adjacent Municipal, County, and State Plan*

D. Prior Florence Township Master Plans

The original Florence Township Master Plan was adopted in August, 1976 with Amendments dated:

May, June, October, December, 1987	April, 1992
May, 1989	February, March, April, 1994
February, April, May, June, October, 1990	May 22, July 24, 1995
September, 1991	April, August, September, 1999

The 1976 Master Plan contained a number of required and optional elements that were amended in subsequent years. The Table of Contents of the 1976 Master Plan included the following Chapters, some of which were marked as *Reserved* for preparation at a future time. Some of the Chapters shown as *Reserved* in 1976 remained as *Reserved* in 2022.

1976 Master Plan Elements

- I. Introduction
- II. Data & Statistics about Florence
- III. Community Facilities Plan Element
- IV. Recreation Plan Element
- V. Utility Service Plan Element
- VI. Circulation Plan Element
- VII. Housing Element and Fair Share Plan
- VIII. Land Use Plan Element
- IX. Historic Preservation Plan Element

E. Current and Prior Florence Township Housing Elements and Fair Share Plans

The Housing Element and Fair Share Plan has been revised a number of times due to Rounds One, Two and Three of the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) regulations and the more recent requirement that municipalities obtain approval of their affordable housing obligation from the Court. Housing Elements and Fair Share Plans were prepared, dated, or adopted as follows:

January 5, 1987, Resubmitted June 1, 1987	April 20, 1998
June 27, 1988 Amendment	December 2, 2008
July 25, 1988 Amendment	December 8, 2015
March 31, 1989	April 24, 2018
April 27, 1992	August, 2018
March 1993, Amended February, 1994	

The most recent Housing Plan Element is the 2018 Third Round Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (Plan), April 2018, Amended August 2018. The Plan was prepared by Clarke Caton Hintz and is contained in a separate document from this Master Plan. The Plan was prepared for Florence Township in accordance with the New Jersey Fair Housing Act and the rules of the New Jersey Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) at NJAC 5:93 et seq and to address the Court-approved Settlement Agreement (FSHC Agreement) between Florence Township and Fair Share Housing Center (FSHC), dated November 22, 2016, amended December 19, 2017. The Plan was submitted to the Superior Court, Burlington County Law Division to obtain a third round Judgment of Compliance and Repose to July 2025.

F. Prior Florence Township Master Plan Reexaminations

The Township's most recent Reexamination Report was adopted on May 22, 2018. Prior to 2018, Reexamination Reports were prepared, dated, or adopted as follows:

May, 1982	June 19, 2000
July 26, 1982	February 24, 2003
June 27, 1994	June 16, 2008

G. Plan Endorsement – Visioning Process for Florence Township

Florence Township participated in the Plan Endorsement process for the regional Route 130/Delaware River Corridor Strategic Plan that the New Jersey State Planning Commission (SPC) endorsed on April 28, 1999. Plan Endorsement is a voluntary review process established by the SPC to provide technical assistance and coordination of the State for municipalities, counties, and regional agencies to meet the goals of the State Planning Act and the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

In 2021, the Florence Township Council agreed to participate with Burlington County and the eleven other municipalities that comprised the Route 130/Delaware River Corridor (Corridor) to attain a new Plan Endorsement for the Corridor from the SPC. The Plan Endorsement process requires a municipality to prepare a vision statement that is based on public input. Because of the obstacles for holding in-person public visioning sessions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Florence Township prepared and posted an online survey to obtain public input to develop a vision statement for the municipality in early 2022. On March 22, 2022, the Florence Township Plan Endorsement Advisory Committee and the Florence Township Planning Board held a public meeting to review the results of the survey, discuss the draft vision statement, and refine the vision statement from public input obtained during the meeting.

The final Vision Statement from the Visioning Process is included in its entirety in Appendix A. Since the final elements of the Master Plan and the Visioning Process were occurring at the same time, the Master Plan considered the Vision and the Vision considered the Master Plan. For this reason, the Vision Statement is included in this 2022 Master Plan.

H. Summary

The Township prepared its first Master Plan in 1976 and prepared Amendments to the Master Plan or Master Plan Reexaminations within the required time periods set by the Municipal Land Use Law. The 2021 Master Plan contains the most comprehensive inventory of existing conditions and goals and objectives to guide the Township well into the future.

II. STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES, PRINCIPLES, ASSUMPTIONS, POLICIES AND STANDARDS

A. Introduction

The **Statement of Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards** is the first required element of a Master Plan and it is the base upon which the constituent proposals for the physical, economic and social development of the municipality are built. The following Objectives, Principles, Assumptions, Policies and Standards have been adopted by the Township of Florence Planning Board for this 2022 Master Plan.

1. Managed and balanced economic development and residential growth is encouraged in the Township to achieve land development that is both aesthetically pleasing and economically valuable. Township policies such as zoning and upgrading municipal services should encourage the development of environmentally conscientious commercial, retail and service development providing needed services, jobs and a strengthened tax base.
2. The unique character, existing scale, history and heritage of the Township and in particular, the Roebling Village area and the Town of Florence, should be preserved and protected through the use of appropriate development controls. Individual historic sites throughout the Township should likewise be preserved and all should be promoted.
3. Develop Route 130 in a manner generally consistent with the other goals of the Master plan.
4. Improvements and expansions to the Township's water and sewer systems should be balanced with the existing need and coordinated with the Township's future land use policies.
5. Residential development standards should permit flexibility of design in order to promote the retention of open space and the preservation of critical areas. Growth should be managed and consistent with the availability of municipal services. While complying with affordable house requirements, growth impacts and financial costs should be minimized.
6. The remaining agricultural areas of Township that are situated to the south of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension and east of the Highway Commercial Zoning District represents an important and rapidly diminishing resource that should be protected and preserved from inappropriate development that will be harmful to its long term viability as an agricultural area.
7. Residential development should be generally confined to the area north of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension in the more densely populated urban areas of the Township in order to prevent sprawl, wasteful expenditures on infrastructure, and adverse impacts on

agriculture, wetlands, floodplains, water bodies and other environmentally sensitive areas that are more prevalent in the areas south of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension and east of the Highway Commercial Zoning District. The areas targeted for denser residential development are the older portions of the Township close to the Delaware River where infrastructure and services are available and where additional development is consistent with smart growth and the existing scale and character Township.

8. Future residential development in areas to the south of the New Jersey Turnpike Extension and east of the Highway commercial Zoning District should be limited to very low density residential development where public sewerage is not and should not be available with the exception of water and sewer service to Florence Township Memorial High School.
9. Gaps in water and sewer infrastructure can be connected but water and sewer should not be extended to areas outside of the sewer service area or water service area.
10. The existence of neighborhood commercial areas serving the needs of neighborhood residents is important to the Township. The Township should look for and support realistic ways to assist these areas in becoming more economically viable.
11. The closing of the Roebling Plant, a site of strategic importance to the Township, still adversely affects the Township's character and economic base. The Township should look for ways to make this site more attractive to redevelopment and accessible to the waterfront and Route 130.
12. Significant changes have occurred to the road networks in Florence Township. The changes have affected the character and rate of development in the Township and the region. The implications on the character and future development of Florence should be actively monitored so that the consequences and impacts of development, specifically on circulation and road networks, can be addressed and mitigated by the Township and where required, the Township in conjunction with County, State and regional authorities.
13. Township objectives, principles, assumptions, policies and standards should be consistent with smart growth and sustainable development.
14. Detailed, refined definitions should be provided of distribution centers and warehouses since there are unique distinctions, each with a different impact on surrounding land uses and infrastructure.
15. Permitted and accessory uses in each zoning district should be reviewed, revised and updated, as needed, to reflect current uses than may have been previously envisioned and to meet the needs of the citizens of the Township of Florence.